WILLIAM MANCHESTER
AUTHOR

MRS. JOHN F. KENNEDY
Critic

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Kennedys Seek Ban On Parts of Book

By LYLE DENNISTON
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The Kennedy family will go into a New York State court this week to try to force changes in a forthcoming book about President John F. Kennedy's assassination.

A complaint will be filed within the next two or three days, it has been learned, to prevent publication of the book in its present form.

Mrs. John F. Kennedy and other members of the family, it is understood, are not seeking to bar publication of the book, but to delete material that is considered "offensive" to Mrs. Kennedy.

If that material is taken out, it is understood, the family would do nothing further to keep the book from being issued by Harper & Row, publishers, and a serialization by Look Magazine.

Author of the book, "Death of a President," is William Manchester. He was chosen by Mrs. Kennedy to write the book "in the interest of accuracy."

It has been learned that the objections to the manuscript in its present form deal only with what has been described as "a minute portion" of the book. The objections are those of the President's widow, and they cover matters that Mrs. Kennedy regards either as "too intimate" or possibly "reflecting on other persons"—that is, President Johnson.

Look magazine has said it plans to begin running the book in serial form in its Jan. 10 issue. Harper & Row expects to issue the complete book sometime in April.

Lawyers representing the family yesterday sent the publisher and the magazine a "summons" indicating that legal action would soon be taken against them. The summons did not spell out what that action would be.

However, it was learned that the complaint will object to certain passages in the manuscript, and that it will ask for "a variety of judicial relief, including injunctive relief."

That means the family will seek a court order to hold up publication until the challenged material is deleted.

Mrs. Kennedy has not read the entire manuscript, it is understood. A three-member editorial board read it for her, but she has had read to her certain passages in the book that were considered potentially difficult, offensive or unpleasant to her.

The Kennedy family is understood to regard the challenged passages as having nothing to do with history and

See BOOK, Page A-6

BOOK

Continued From Page A-1

contributing nothing to the account of the late President's murder.

Those portions are reportedly based upon conversations between Mrs. Kennedy and Manchester. In some of these conversations, sources have said, Mrs. Kennedy "unburdened her soul" to the author.

In addition to regarding some of the material used as too intimate or as possibly reflecting on President Johnson, it has been learned that the family also believes that Manchester "twisted some things because he had reached some conclusions of his own."

Agreements Cited

It was learned that the Kennedy family contends that both the publisher and Look magazine have violated agreements with the family about the Manchester manuscript. It is understood that there was an agreement—both verbal and written—that Mrs. Kennedy would be in control of what the manuscript said regarding personal matters about herself.

The violation that the family considers to have been committed has nothing to do with publication dates, it is understood.

At one time, there was some thought that publication should be delayed until 1969 or 1970. However, it was decided later, sources said, that for political reasons it would be better to "get it over with." This apparently stemmed from feeling that if publication was held up until 1969 or 1970, the family might be accused of reviving the events and memories surrounding the President's assassination in order to advance the political fortunes of other members of the family.

Author Comments

Manchester said in Middletown, Conn., today he has "confidence in the book. I think it will stand on its own. I ask only that people give it a chance."

Asked about the impending legal move, Manchester said, "I don't know enough about the law."

"It's rather well known," he said, "that's wouldn't have taken a step in the publication of this book without the approval of Robert Kennedy, speaking as a member of the Kennedy

family."

Asked whether he had agreed to show the book to Mrs. Kennedy prior to its publication, Manchester said he thought that this was "getting into an area of written agreements. That sort of thing should be settled by an attorney."

In answer to a question whether Mrs. Kennedy has seen the book, Manchester said, "Not to my knowledge."

The three-member editorial board named to read the manuscript for the family included one former aide to President Kennedy—Richard M. Goodwin—and two former asistants to Robert Kennedy when he was attorney general—Edwin O. Guthman and John Siegenthaler. Goodwin is now doing research and writing and Guthman and Siegenthaler are now newspapermen.

Manchester's manuscript also has been read, it has been learned, by Arthur Schlesinger Jr., a former White House aide, and Burke Marshall, a former assistant attorney general. However, those two men were not formally designated by the family as members of the review panel.

Look Plans to Publish

William Attwood, editor-in-chief of Look, acknowledged receipt of the summons yesterday but said the magazine was going ahead with its plan to serialize the book.

"The presses are already rolling," he said. "We're publishing. I don't see any way it can be stopped."

He declined to discuss the legal aspects of the summons pending the return of Look's lawyer, John Harding, who was in Washington.

Mrs. Kennedy chose Manchester to record the events of the assassination "in the interest of accuracy" but later was reported disturbed by his use of some of her personal recollections in the book. Manchester is reported to have 10 hours of tape recordings of her deep personal thoughts and recollections.

Look reportedly paid about $650,000 for the serialization rights and then sold its ownership of the European rights for further sterilization for nearly $300,000.